

The Woodward Medal for Research Excellence

2026 Scheme Guidelines



1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The Woodward Medal in Science and Technology and the Woodward Medal in Humanities and Social Sciences (collectively 'The Woodward Medals') were established in 2001 from a trust donated by Sir Edward Woodward, a former Chancellor of the University, and Lady Lois Woodward, and supplemented by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the University.
- 1.2 Up to two Woodward Medals are awarded annually to University of Melbourne staff for research published within the preceding five years that is considered to have made the most significant contribution to knowledge and research excellence in fields relating to 'Science and Technology' and 'Humanities and Social Sciences' respectively.
- 1.3 Sir Edward Woodward AC OBE QC (6 August 1928 – 15 April 2010), was Chancellor of the University of Melbourne from 1990 to 2001 and served on the University Council for 18 years. In his early life he had graduated from the University with a Bachelor and Master of Laws, and after stepping down as Chancellor, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the university. In his career, he served as Queen's Counsel, federal judge, board member of numerous Royal Commissions, Director-General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and Chairman of the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission in 1973-74. He was made an Officer in the Order of the British Empire in 1969, a Knight Bachelor in 1982 and a Companion in the Order of Australia in 2001.
- 1.4 The award of the Woodward Medal is overseen by Chancellery (Research and Enterprise) and administered by the Researcher Development Schemes (RDS) team in Research, Innovation and Commercialisation (RIC) with input from faculties.
- 1.5 The Woodward Medals are awarded on the recommendation of two selection committees: one with Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) expertise, and one with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) expertise. Both are chaired by a delegate of the Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Research) (DVCR) and comprise a minimum of four senior academics. The selection committees recommend the recipients of the Woodward Medals to the Vice-Chancellor for endorsement.
- 1.6 The Woodward Medals are struck in silver and presented to awardees during a graduation ceremony. The cash prize of \$10,000 for each Woodward Medalist is provided by DVCR strategic funds.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 Applicants for the Woodward Medal must be members of staff of the University of Melbourne at the time of application.
- 2.2 Honorary staff are eligible to apply if their primary university affiliation as stated on the nominated research is the University of Melbourne; and they satisfy all other Woodward Medal criteria.
- 2.3 The nominated research must be original research that was published between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2025.
- 2.4 Research is defined as *'the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and*

*creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings’.*¹

- This includes creative work when it is accompanied by exegesis or other form of critical analysis; it is open to peer review; and it has an enduring form.
- This **does not** include artefacts that summarise, describe, compile, report, or apply existing knowledge without creating new knowledge or using it in a new and creative way, such as summaries or reviews; descriptive overviews; transcriptive or recording activities; routine data collection; teaching-focused academic work; technical or consulting reports

- 2.5 The form of the published research may be a book, a refereed journal article or a suite of related books and/or articles published electronically or in hard copy, or other creative work published in an appropriate digital medium in the preceding five years. If an application is for a suite of related books and/or articles, applications may include up to, but no more than, three items for review.
- 2.6 Consistent with long term practice and in alignment with the terms of the Woodward Medal trust record, the Woodward Medal in Humanities and Social Sciences is broadly interpreted and open to applications from the Humanities, Arts/Creative Arts and Social Sciences.
- 2.7 In 2025, the University established the [Littlejohn Medal](#), adjacent and commensurate in institutional prestige to the Woodward Medal, to recognise a significant contribution to knowledge and research excellence in Health and Medical Sciences.
- 2.8 In deciding whether to apply for a Woodward or Littlejohn Medal, applicants should take note of the definitions, guidance and examples set out by the ARC’s [Medical Research Policy](#) (particularly s2 and s3) and the definition of medical research in the [National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992](#) (s4). Research that would be eligible for ARC funding should apply to the Woodward Medal; research that would be eligible for NHMRC funding should apply to the Littlejohn Medal.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 Applications must demonstrate the excellence of the nominated research.

Supporting statements

- 3.2 Members of staff who are applying for a Woodward Medal must be supported in writing by a colleague in the applicant’s faculty who has knowledge of the applicant’s field (**‘internal support statement’**). Sign-off of the internal support statement must be provided by the Dean of the Faculty, the Associate Dean (Research) or relevant Head of Department/School.
- 3.3 The internal support statement must address each of the following:
- The nature of the research;
 - The significance of the publication or work in terms of its contribution to knowledge and research excellence;
 - The applicant’s or applicants’ specific contribution/s to the research.
- 3.4 Additionally, the application must also include a written supporting statement from an independent expert who is **external to the University**, such as a preeminent researcher in the discipline or at a national institute, or an editor within a reputable publisher, or equivalent (**‘external support statement’**).
- 3.5 People who were co-authors, collaborators, or co-applicants on the research nominated in the

¹ Australian Research Council, *Vol 1 ERA National Report*, 2018.

application are not viewed to be sufficiently independent and cannot provide the external support statement.

Application requirements

- 3.6 Co-authored or multi-authored research can be included in individual or joint applications. If a joint application by co-authors is awarded the Woodward Medal, the award and prize will be shared equally.
- Where an individual applicant includes a co-authored work as evidence of research excellence, the applicant must explain their own and all authors' respective contributions to the research in the application.
 - If there is another University of Melbourne co-author on a nominated research publication who is not part of the application, the applicant must explain why the co-author is not part of the application.
 - Where a joint application is made by co-authors of the same research publications, the applicants must jointly apply on the same application form. In the application form, each applicant must explicitly detail their own contribution to the research and the publications, and each provide their academic curriculum vitae.
- 3.7 A person may not apply for more than one institutional medal (Woodward, Marles or Littlejohn) in the same year.
- 3.8 Submitted applications will not be checked by the RDS team for completeness or eligibility prior to final lodgment; this is the applicant's responsibility. Ineligible or incomplete applications will be excluded and not considered by the selection committees.
- 3.9 Applications must be submitted via the SmartyGrants portal. Digital access to the research work(s) under consideration is preferred. Applicants are encouraged to provide a digital copy of publications if possible or submit a final proof version of the publication via email. If a digital copy of the work is not available, the applicant should contact the RDS team (res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au) to discuss alternatives.

4. SELECTION PROCESS

- 4.1 The Woodward Medal Selection Committee will recommend award of the Medal to the research that is considered to have made the most significant contribution to knowledge and research excellence.

5. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. Applications are assessed by one of two Woodward Medal Selection Committees, depending on the nomination for STEM or HASS. Both committees are appointed and chaired by a delegate of the DVCR.
- 5.2. In exceptional cases, Selection Committees may decide to share an award (and the prize money) between multiple applications.
- 5.3. In determining the awards, preference may be given to applicants who have not previously been awarded an institutional Medal (Marles, Woodward or Littlejohn).
- 5.4. As a reflection of the Woodward Medal's prestige and purpose within the University's recognition and reward system, the Selection Committee may give preference to publications based on original research completed at the University of Melbourne.
- 5.5. If an appropriate awardee cannot be identified for one of the medals, the Selection Committee may choose not to award a Woodward Medal in that year.

- 5.6. To avoid perceptions of conflict of interest, Selection Committee members should also not be internal supporters of Woodward Medalist applicants under consideration in the same year.

6. 2026 KEY DATES

2 March	Release of guidelines and application portal
14 May at 3 pm	Final applications due to RIC via SmartyGrants
August	Selection committees meet
September/October	Medalists announced (<i>subject to institutional strategic communications planning</i>) Medalists will be individually notified prior to the broader release of results.

7. CONTACTS

7. Queries regarding eligibility, application and committee processes should be directed to: res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au.